

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE MORONGO BASIN CULTURAL ARTS COUNCIL – MBCAC**

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the above Corporation was held on **April 2, 2020**, via digital conference call using Zoom.

The meeting was called to order by President Marcia Geiger at 5:05 PM.

Board Members Present: Marcia Geiger (President), Karan Murphy (Vice President), Ed Keesling (Past President), Raini Armstrong (Secretary), John Henson (Treasurer), Bill Green (Communication Director, Art Tours Director), Mitch Miller (Registrar, Membership Director), Sherri Sullivan (AIPP Director)

Others present: Aimee Buyea (Galleries Director)

Not present: Julianne Koza (Chaparral Artists Representative)

QUORUM was established.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT:

Geiger informed the Board that MBCAC pays \$45 per month to Bank of America’s Merchant Services to have a merchant terminal at Gallery 62. During the COVID19 closure, we are not using this service, but the monthly fee is still being charged. MBCAC has moved to Chase for their banking needs. MBCAC has also moved to Square POS (Point of Sale) which includes merchant services, and the Square POS will replace the Bank of America merchant services in the fall. Geiger recommends canceling the Bank of America merchant services account immediately, to reduce unnecessary fees. If a transaction is required at Gallery 62 before finalizing the transition to Square POS, it will be conducted using the Square tablet from JTAG. The Board agreed with the cancelation of merchant services through Bank of America.

The USBank grant was declined. No reasoning was given.

MBCAC is using Zoom to conduct its April Board of Directors meeting, and The Arts Connection account was graciously provided for temporary use. Geiger suggests that MBCAC purchase their own Pro account, which will cost \$65/year because of an offer through TechSoup. The pro account allows for unlimited meeting lengths, an unlimited number of meeting participants, and up to three concurrent meetings. The free version is limited to 40-minute sessions and only a certain number of participants. MBCAC plans on utilizing Zoom to increase communication during the uncertain times of COVID19. In addition to regularly scheduled Board meetings, the Art Tours meetings can also be held through Zoom.

VICE PRESIDENT’S REPORT:

No report was given.

PAST PRESIDENT’S REPORT:

Ed Keesling informed the Board that the Grubstakes parade was canceled for the year. MBCAC will not be participating in it. The 29 Palms Art Gallery auction was postponed indefinitely. Once the Gallery opens, and the auction is rescheduled, there might be an opportunity to donate. For the time being, the Art Tours registration donation cannot be used.

SECRETARY’S REPORT:

The Minutes of the January, February, and March 2020 minutes had been shared with the Board for review via digital communication. Corrections and suggestions were requested and incorporated, but only a small number of votes to approve were received. Geiger suggested the vote to approve be delayed until all Board members have read the minutes and reacted to the poll.

The Board agreed that if seven positive votes are received during a poll to approve minutes, based on the 2020 Directors, the Secretary can consider those minutes to be approved. The Secretary will post the approved and signed minutes to the MBCAC website under Board Minutes.

TREASURER’S REPORT:

Due to the COVID-19 situation, we are experiencing a flatline of incoming finances. The graphs provided to the Board indicate this reality. Art Tours registrations are limited, as are the catalog ad purchases, with limited gallery revenue.

The beginning balance in March 2020 with Bank of America was \$41,724, with total deposits of \$59 and expenses of \$7,040. The bank balance at the end of February was \$34,743.

The beginning balance in March 2020 with Chase was \$255, with total deposits of \$3,446 and expenses of \$467. The bank balance at the end of February was \$3,234.

The corporation remains solvent.

Stipends paid out, show up in the expenses for March. We have an adequate cushion to work with, but it will be tight with ongoing gallery expenses during the closure.

Director Buyea felt that March did not show as a large of a loss because the galleries weren’t closed for the entire month. Several purchases went through, artists paid their fees, and the Life Drawing class at JTAG was still held.

President Geiger asked Director Buyea to discuss the Small Business Administration (SBA) loan and filing liability insurance claims. SBA is offering ‘forgivable’ loans, loans that behave like grants. The application process seems easy enough to tackle. She feels like the financial cushion should not be relied on during the closure. Aimee strongly feels like MBCAC should apply for loans to lessen the ongoing stress of gallery expenses. There are small business administration loans we might qualify for as well. These go through banks. MBCAC is still attached to Bank of America, so we could apply for the loan through them, or we might be able to go through our new bank, Chase. The amount requested would cover expenses accrued starting in March and going until the end of the year; payroll, payroll expenses, gallery rent, and utilities. Geiger asked Henson to pursue this SBA loan through either of the banks that MBCAC is currently associated with. **[Action item]**

MBCAC should file an insurance claim soon. Buyea was asked to search through the filing cabinets of the Gallery for the MBCAC policy and any other necessary paperwork for this insurance claim.

[Action Item]

Geiger applied for an Inland Empire Community Foundation (IECF) grant, a capacity-building grant that might cover the point of sale hardware and training fees. The request was for \$5,300. The deadline was April 1, 2020, and we will not be notified until July.

Of this \$5,300 request, \$2,700 would be directed toward building an online marketplace for MBCAC that the Galleries and Art Tours can make use of. The California Arts Council 2019 Development grant money can be reallocated for some of this online marketplace work.

The Bank of America merchant services cancellation has not been completed yet, Marcia will take care of it. [**Action item**]

OSAT (Open Studio Art Tours):

Director Green is playing it by ear as to whether the April 30 deadline will stay live. Many options are being considered that will cover situations that might arise over the next few months. Green is looking into several possibilities – one is that nothing changes, and society proceeds as normal starting mid-summer. A second possibility is the health crisis is still precarious, and we need to significantly trim back the event. The third possibility is that concerns remain high, and large gatherings are seen as dangerous, which would force Art Tours to cancel altogether.

Currently, he feels like it is still too soon to cancel anything. Obviously, if MBCAC must cancel the 2020 Open Studio Art Tours, all refunds will be made.

Green is holding off on any spending. No waste of resources will be allowed.

Green feels as if the following five (5) states exist for the 2020 Art Tours, most considering the worst-case scenarios of limited Tours opportunities and/or complete cancelation.

- 1) proceed with tours as planned, no changes – and promote heavily online.
- 2) cancel the 2020 Art Tours altogether.
- 3) postpone the Tours to Nov/Dec. MBCAC might not have adequate time to make such a change. Many other events have moved to the fall, increasing event conflict. Still, we should be aware and open to this possibility.
- 4) Art Tours ‘continues’ as planned by using alternate means and implementing an app & website option. Modifications should include art representation allowed only outdoors (each participating artist should display their art outside of their home) and limiting the number of participants.

The Board was curious about what the lowest number of participants would be to still proceed with tours. Fifty participants will be our bottom line. To print a catalog, we cannot publish it any later than the beginning of August. A much-truncated catalog with a list of artists and a good map could still be produced.

Buyea feels like if we go full app mode, we should still have a lower quality catalog – newspaper print – or a pamphlet. This could be a tangible reminder to visit the webspace.

Murphy was asked for her thoughts about not producing a catalog. She has only been able to sell five ad spots. She feels like the extreme caution that shops and businesses are practicing, for a good reason, will hurt MBCAC, because no one feels like they can purchase anything. Even if MBCAC commits to a track quickly, a lot of her ad purchasers will not be able to purchase ads this year at all. Her opinion matches with Sullivan on going with a digital app only. The idea of what a digital ad looks like must be discussed.

An app still comes at a cost, but if done right, this could help MBCAC in the future. More information can be shared for each artist. The platform can be updated and expanded every year. This seems to be a feasible option. Green is still trying to come up with a way to photograph artists' work, which will be a vital element to include because of the visual nature of an app.

Some of the grant money, if/when received, might cover some of the cost of app creation.

President Geiger felt like we can and probably should move forward with the app. The extensive catalog would not be produced. Green shared that this app platform could work beautifully to provide members with a way to sell their work all year long.

John Henson feels like we might need a go-no-go decision date, and Green doesn't have that answer yet. April is likely a bust, so we should decide by mid-May on how to deal with Art Tours 2020. For the fully digital app option, a three-month lead time is recommended. We would need to begin development in July.

Henson shared his concerns that by July and August, people will feel cooped up and will be eager to get on the road and travel. Is it too soon to decide to reshape the 2020 Art Tours, removing the physical element of it – the ability to visit an artist's studio?

Further discussion is needed before a decision is made. Ultimately, the Board shared interest in pursuing the app. The opportunities could be fantastic, with the added ability to share video, artist profiles, their artworks, and enhancing clickable ad promotions.

Officially, the Board decided to scrap the printed catalog for 2020. The decision made in part because there will not be adequate time to secure funds for printing. The time crunch will also delay the receiving of artist information, which would delay printing significantly. A digital catalog might still be produced, but some discussion will be necessary to plan for integrating it into the online marketplace. President Geiger asked for an assurance that the app can still be used if the Art Tours is forced to cancel altogether. Green shared that a strong web presence and Art Tours app would only benefit artists because it will grow year to year and provide the commerce space that we do not yet have in place.

Green will send out a survey to the Board asking for expectations and wish-list items that will serve to help shape the app in the coming weeks.

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Buyea and Green are coming up with ways to share artist stories about how people are dealing with the COVID19 situation. This spotlight will provide a healthy outlet and keep thoughts on the art world.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Membership is at 312 active members, 52 members are overdue on their membership, 30 have lapsed, and 4 new members have signed up in the last thirty days. This is very low for this time of year, likely due to the COVID19 situation.

Registrar report – Art Tours has had 3 cancellations. 24 total registrations. One person has requested a refund for their tour registration and shared that they do not plan on renewing their membership at this time.

GALLERIES DIRECTOR REPORT:

Artists are pulling out of the May show at Gallery 62 and JTAG. All artists are interested in rescheduling rather than canceling. Director Buyea is planning on rescheduling May artists to September. April artists want to reschedule as well. June programming is uncertain because the Joshua Tree Highlands Artist Residency (JTHAR) had to cancel their Artist in Residency program. They no longer need the space to feature the artist's work during June. The July juried exhibit at JTAG is up in the air, Buyea feeling like it might end up getting canceled. Buyea feels as if the galleries could be closed until September. The number of events that have been postponed or canceled, and the mood of uncertainty felt in the community could significantly affect any summer shows. Buyea will know by early May whether there will be a show at JTAG in June, or if the Gallery will be forced to go dark. She will reach out to Tobi, who prepared the 2019 juried exhibit, to determine the lead time necessary for the possible 2019 juried exhibition.

Buyea and Green have gone through a lot of work to revamp the Gallery 62 website, gallery62.org, so that art exhibits can be shared digitally, and sales can be made online. Hammer and Brush, which was supposed to show from March 6-April 26, is on display. Buyea plans on featuring an artist of the show every day via social media. This is a perfect opportunity to establish a repeatable online commerce presence. Sales are made through email currently.

The photography and initial exhibit setup will require time, and this must be incorporated moving forward as we develop a plan to create this online commerce in the future. Co-promoting will occur over the next few weeks between JTAG and Gallery 62.

Geiger asked about how Buyea was going to deal with art pickup. She said that she was considering scheduling 1-hour art pickups, so only one person is at the Gallery at any given time. Buyea is willing to be onsite during the day unless it is unnecessary. Geiger shared that Buyea can offer to be available, but that she should only come in after all art has been retrieved.

ART IN PUBLIC PLACES:

The 29 Palms Restaurant venue during March did well with sales, but since the shut-down, it has slowed. Sullivan is looking into new art venues and already has a potential manager willing to manage the Senior Citizen's center in Yucca Valley. These opportunities will be pursued when locations can open.

Geiger asked if the Senior Center will be able to process sales. Sullivan will inquire as soon as she can do so. She also recommends that MBCAC open a Venmo account, allowing purchases through them, MBCAC can confirm that they receive their percentage before paying the artists. Currently, Venmo doesn't charge transaction fees. All the venues could be connected this way. During a purchase, the customer would need to provide the artist name and title of work during the transaction.

A sign would be hung on the wall at each venue, listing the MBCAC Venmo account. Pie for the People would be the perfect location to try this out on. Sullivan will discuss this further with Geiger.
[Action item]

The signs came in, and they are awaiting installation.

If people wish to get placed on a list of artists interested in showing at any of the Art in Public Places venues, artists can visit the website at <http://www.mbcac.org/art-in-public-places/>.

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

Geiger asked the Board if Friday evenings could remain open for any MBCAC emergency discussion sessions through April using the Zoom Conferencing app. The Board agreed with this plan.

GUEST COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

NEXT MEETING:

The next regular meeting of the Board of Directors will be held on May 7, 2020, at 6:00 PM. The location will probably be online using Zoom unless the Center for Healthy Generations is open. In which case, it will be at the meeting room, 57121 Sunnyslope Dr., Yucca Valley, CA 92284.

There being no further business, the meeting was duly adjourned at 6:53 PM.

These Minutes are certified by the Secretary.

Signature _____ Date 12/4/2020